

REMARKS

This paper is filed in response to the official action dated August 16, 2005 (hereinafter, the official action).

The applicants acknowledge the examiner's withdrawal of the objection to the drawings, the rejections of claims 55-58 and 64-69 under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd ¶, as indefinite, the rejections of claims 54, 59, and 63 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,000,599 to McCall, and the rejections of claims 55-58, 60, 62, and 63 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over McCall.

Claims 54-69 are pending. Claims 56, 57, 58, and 61 have been objected to, but are allowable in substance, and claims 64-69 have been allowed. Thus, claims 54, 55, 59, 60, 62, and 63 remain at issue.

Claims 54, 55, 59, and 60 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,648,535 to Ferrara, Jr. ("Ferrara"), and claims 62 and 63 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Ferrara.

The bases for the claim rejections are addressed below in the order presented in the official action. Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is solicited in view of the following remarks.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of claims 54, 55, 59, and 60 as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) by Ferrara, and the rejections of claims 62 and 63 as obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ferrara.

It is respectfully submitted that *Ferrara is not a proper reference under any section of 35 U.S.C. §102* because the subject matter claimed in the application is entitled to a January 15, 2000, filing date, which precedes (1) the November 18, 2003, issue date of Ferrara, (2) the August 29, 2002, publication date of Ferrara, and (3) the February 27, 2001, filing date of Ferrara. Accordingly, the 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejections of claims 54, 55, 59, and 60, and the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejections of claims 62 and 63 over Ferrara should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

It is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Should the examiner wish to discuss the foregoing, or any matter of form or procedure in an effort to advance this application to allowance, he is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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